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BOROUGH OF DEVIZES

Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health for the Year 1954

MR. MAYOR, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to submit herewith my Annual Report for the year 1954 on the Public Health and Sanitary Administration for the Borough.

As this is the last report I shall make to you, I wish to express my appreciation of the courteous and patient hearing you and your predecessors have given me during my twenty-one years' service whenever it has been my duty to advise you, and also to express my gratitude for the willing co-operation I have almost invariably received from all members of your staff during that period.

I have the honour to be,

Your obedient servant,

*Public Health Department,
The Chequers, Devizes*

G. H. H. WAYLEN,
Medical Officer of Health.

GENERAL STATISTICS

Area in Acres ...	...	...	...	...	...	1,391 acres
Population ...	...	...	...	...	...	8,050
Number of inhabited houses ...	...	...	...	...	...	2,844
Rateable Value ...	...	...	...	...	...	£56,008
Product of ld. rate ...	...	...	...	...	...	£226-11-10

VITAL STATISTICS

Live Births

	M.	F.	Total
Live Births ...	61	69	130
Legitimate ...	57	62	119
Illegitimate ...	4	7	11

Live Birth Rate

Borough (Crude) ...	16.15
(Adjusted) ...	16.79
England and Wales ...	15.2
Comparability Factor ...	1.04

Still Births

Legitimate ...	1	2	3
Illegitimate ...			Nil

Death Rate

Borough (Crude) ...	20.6
(Adjusted) ...	17.1
England and Wales ...	11.3
Comparability Factor ...	0.83

Death of Infants under One Year

All Infants ...	1	1	2
Legitimate ...	1	1	2
Illegitimate ...			Nil

Infantile Mortality Rate

Borough	15.39
England and Wales	25.5

Deaths of Infants under 4 weeks of Age

	M.	F.	Total
All Infants	1	1	2
Legitimate	1	1	2
Illegitimate	—	—	—

Maternal Mortality Rate

Borough	Nil
England and Wales	0.69 per 1000

CAUSES OF DEATH

	M.	F.	Tot.		M.	F.	Tot.
1—Tuberculosis—Respiratory	1	—	1	21—Other Circulatory Diseases ...	2	3	5
2—Tuberculosis—Other Forms	—	—	—	22—Influen-a	1	1	2
3—Syphilitic Diseases	—	—	—	23—Pneumonia	5	8	13
4—Diphtheria	—	—	—	24—Bronchitis	1	—	1
5—Whooping Cough	—	—	—	25—Other Diseases of Respiratory System ...	—	1	1
6—Meningococcal Infections	—	—	—	26—Ulcer of Stomach and Duodenum ...	—	—	—
7—Acute Poliomyelitis	—	—	—	27—Gastritis, Enteritis and Diarrhoea ...	—	—	—
8—Measles	—	—	—	28—Nephritis and Nephrosis	2	—	2
9—Other Infective and Parasitic Diseases ...	—	—	—	29—Hyperplasia of Prostate	2	—	2
10—Malignant Neoplasm (Stomach)	1	—	1	30—Pregnancy, Childbirth and Abortion ...	—	—	—
11—Malignant Neoplasm (Lung and Bronchus) ...	—	3	3	31—Congenital Malformations	—	1	1
12—Malignant Neoplasm (Breast)	—	2	2	32—Other defined and Ill-defined Diseases ...	7	3	10
13—Malignant Neoplasm (Uterus)	—	1	1	33—Motor Vehicle Accidents	—	—	—
14—Other Malignant and Lymphatic Neoplasms	10	6	16	34—All Other Accidents	—	—	—
15—Leukaemia and Aleukaemia	—	1	1	35—Suicide	—	—	—
16—Diabetes	1	—	1	36—Homicide and Operations of War ...	—	—	—
17—Vascular Lesions of Nervous System ...	7	13	20				
18—Hypertension with Heart Disease ...	29	32	61				
19—Coronary Disease, Angina	—	1	1				
20—Other Heart Diseases	4	17	21				
				Total	76	90	166

Satisfactory features are the absence of mortality from notifiable infectious diseases and the hazards of childbirth. Respiratory Tuberculosis - a single death; diseases of the Respiratory System accounted for 15 deaths; Malignant Diseases - 23 deaths (14%); Diseases of Cardiovascular system totalled 108 or 65%; so close on 80% of deaths were attributable to causes indicating an ageing and long-lived community.

GENERAL PROVISION FOR HEALTH SERVICES IN THE AREA

Medical Officer of Health : G. H. H. WAYLEN, M.B., D.P.H. (Cantab)

Sanitary Inspector : K. WILDEY, M.S.I.A., C.S.I.B., C.G.L.I., (San Eng.). Royal Sanitary Institute Certificates for Meat and Other Foods Inspection and Sanitary Science as applied to Buildings and Public Works.

Committees

Five Committees of your Council are concerned with Public Health matters. 1—The Health Committee; 2—The Housing and Planning Committee; 3—The General Committee, dealing with sewerage, drainage and disposal of refuse; 4—The Water Committee controlling public water supply, and 5—The Borough Property Committee, as being responsible for the upkeep of close on a hundred old dwellings, most of them substandard and which should be demolished and replaced as soon as possible.

Ambulance Services, Maternity and Child Welfare Services, Clinics—Orthopædic and Psychiatric, etc.

All these services are under the control of the Wiltshire County Council, and are reported on by the Chief Medical Officer to that Body.

Maternity Services

DEVIZES AND DISTRICT MATERNITY HOSPITAL (15 beds)

Institutional Confinements (Borough)

Devizes Maternity Hospital	Live Births	113
	Still Births	2

Domiciliary Confinements	Live Births	27
	Still Births	Nil.

INFECTIOUS DISEASE NOTIFICATIONS

Scarlet Fever	...	...	...	...	...	...	2
Gastroenteritis	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
Food Poisoning	...	...	...	...	...	...	2
Acute Pneumonia	...	...	...	...	...	...	5

Devizes and District Hospital

Total Bed Complement	...	...	...	...	...	60
Average Daily No. of Occupied Beds	...	...	...	...	...	44.28
Total No. of Admissions	...	...	...	...	...	1151

PHYSIOTHERAPY DEPT.

Out-Patient Attendances	...	...	...	...	...	9527
In-Patient Attendances	...	...	...	...	...	1091

RADIOLOGICAL DEPT.

Out-Patient Attendances	...	...	...	...	...	3032
In-Patient Attendances	...	...	...	...	...	538

OUT-PATIENT DEPT.

No. of New Out-Patients	...	...	...	...	...	1972
No. of Attendances	5878

PATHOLOGICAL DEPT.

No. of Visits (In-Patients and Out-Patients)	5404
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NO. OF OPERATIONS

Major	155
Intermediate	165
Minor	636

The new Out-Patient Department commenced work in August. This provides a Treatment Room, Consulting Room, two Examination Rooms and adequate space for Waiting Room accommodation and Office requirements.

DIPHTHERIA IMMUNISATION

Immunisation in relation to Child Population

Primary Immunisations Completed during 1954			Total Immunised Child Population 31st December 1954							
Under 1	1—4 years	5—15 years	Under 1	1	2	3	4	5—9	10—15	Total under 15
57	38	11	4	81	79	100	101	615	545	1525

TUBERCULOSIS

(A) NOTIFICATIONS			Pulmonary		Non-Pulmonary	
Age Group	M.	F.	Total	M.	F.	Total
0—10	—	—	—	—	—	—
10—15	—	—	—	—	—	—
15—25	—	1	1	—	—	—
25—35	2	1	3	—	1	1
35—45	2	1	3	—	—	—
45—65	2	1	3	—	—	—
Over 65	—	1	1	—	—	—
TOTALS	6	5	11	—	1	1

(B) DEATHS			Pulmonary		Non-Pulmonary	
Age Group	M.	F.	Total	M.	F.	Total
0—10	—	—	—	—	—	—
10—15	—	—	—	—	—	—
15—25	—	—	—	—	—	—
25—35	—	—	—	—	—	—
35—45	—	—	—	—	—	—
45—65	—	—	—	—	—	—
Over 65	1	—	1	—	—	—
TOTALS	1	—	1	—	—	—

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA

Water Supply

During the year under review, the quantities of water pumped were as follows :-

Shepherds Shore Waterworks	131,790,000 gallons
Bourton Waterworks	119,760,000 gallons
TOTAL	251,550,000 gallons

Water supplied to :-

Military Camps	66,574,000 gallons
Rural District (including Roundway	
Hospital)	45,892,000 gallons
Borough	134,862,000 gallons

Ministerial sanction in principle was obtained for the laying of a 12 inch trunk and 6 inch and 4 inch link water mains from the reservoir to the Borough at a cost of £37,000. The Council was authorised to obtain tenders and a provisional starting date fixed at 1st May, 1955.

Drainage and Sewerage.

Work on extensive reconstruction and modernisation of the Main Sewage Disposal Works was completed in August, 1954. The work involved new screens, new inlet, two storm-water overflows, alterations to the primary sedimentation tanks, seven filter beds were constructed, sludge drainage pumping station and a new outfall sewer above ground.

The Central and Southern outfall sewers collapsed at two points in the orchard below the Castle. After the occurrence, all householders within the immediate radius of the collapse were visited and warned of the possibility of danger of fly-borne infections and urged to keep their foodstuffs covered. Both sewers were speedily repaired.

Housing.

Progress on New Housing Estates.

						Traditional	New Traditional
Home Farm Estate							
Two Bedrooms	...	...	...	...	...	6	—
Three Bedrooms	...	...	...	...	...	60	33 (Reema)
Four Bedrooms	...	...	...	...	...	—	3 (Reema)
Hillworth Park Estate							
Three Bedrooms	...	...	...	...	...	38	48 (Cornish Unit)
					(Type K for sale)		

Housing erected during 1954

By Local Authority	...	...	...	for letting	45)	
				for sale	23)	68
By Private Enterprise	...	...	...	...	...	10

Progress of Post-War Schemes at 31st December, 1954

Houses completed and occupied	...	...	...			306 (346 units)
Houses completed for sale	...	...	...	...		23
Houses under construction	...	...	...	...		15 (for sale)
Houses authorised but not commenced	...	...	...	...		43
Temporary Bungalows	...	...	...	...		20

At the year's end, the number of applicants on the housing list had risen slightly above 300. The eighty-six families housed during 1954 have been categorised below.

1. Living with parents or otherwise homeless	15
2. From substandard houses	28
3. From lodgings or furnished rooms	11
4. To relieve overcrowding	5
5. Transferred from Duplex flats or prefabricated bungalows into larger premises	16
6. On medical grounds (2 for T.B)	3
7. Transfers	7
8. Eviction case	1

Unfortunately, the Borough (as at the date of this report) has no more land on which to build. Consequently housing is now at a standstill and there is no immediate prospect of commencing the slum clearance so urgently called for. By the year's end your application for sanction to declare the Sheep Street site a "Redevelopment Area" put forward in 1953, had got no further.

The new Bill authorising public funds to be applied to the improvement of old properties had not begun to be utilised but will necessitate a re-inspection of many old substandard dwellings during 1955.

Your Authority has been required to re-survey your area and return an estimate of the number of unfit dwellings; also a five-year plan for dealing with such a number as may be practicable. You have approximately 500 such houses: few of them look capable of "improvement" with Grant aid. Mere lack of space is a major factor in this. As to degrees of unfitness - there are real differences. Some of the worst are little courts and give no chance to rebuild any modern dwelling on the cleared site. Should the Sheep Street Redevelopment Scheme be approved, it alone will give you enough work for the next five years or more, though some groups of houses elsewhere which should be among the first to be eliminated purely on grounds of structural dilapidations may still have to wait.

Public Cleansing and Refuse Disposal

The Nursted tip was kept in such reasonable order as the site available will permit. Fly nuisance was not complained of during the year.

Swimming Pool

The Pool was not closed during the year. Attendances totalled over 24,000.

The Sanitary Inspector's Report, 1954

To The Mayor, Aldermen and Councillors of
the Borough of Devizes

Public Health Department
The Chequers, Devizes

MR. MAYOR, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to submit my Annual Report for the year 1954.

The tables and particulars are in conformity with Ministry of Health regulations and requirements.

Clerical assistance is not provided although most of the copy typing is done for this department by the Borough Surveyor's typist, upon request. Filing, keeping of office records, correspondence and the issue of licences, etc., is done by the writer.

193 Complaints were made to this Department in the course of the year, 95 of which were statutory nuisances and were dealt with accordingly.

Housing and Public Health Acts.

1. Inspection of dwellings during the year.
 1. Inspected for housing defects under P.H. Acts ... 120
 2. Inspected for housing defects under Housing Acts ... 31
 3. Number of dwellings found so dangerous as to be unfit for habitation ... 4
2. Remedy of defects by informal action.

Number of dwellings rendered fit in consequence of Informal Action ... 72
3. Action under Statutory Powers (Public Health and Housing Act, 1936)
 - A. Proceedings under Sections 9, 10 and 16 of Housing Act, 1936.
 1. No. of dwellings in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied ... Nil
 2. No. of dwellings rendered fit after service of formal notices :-
 - (a) By owners ... 2
 - (b) By Local Authority in default of owner ... Nil
 - B. Proceedings under Sections 11 and 13, Housing Act, 1936.
 1. No. of Demolition Orders made ... Nil
 2. No. of houses demolished as result of demolition orders ... 4
 3. No. of undertakings accepted ... Nil
 4. No. of undertakings completed ... Nil
 - C. Proceedings under Sections 25 and 26, Housing Act, 1936 :-
 1. No. of houses under which demolition was made ... Nil
 2. No. of houses demolished in pursuance of Demolition Orders ... Nil
 - D. Proceedings under Section 12, Housing Act, 1936.
 1. No. of separate tenement underground rooms in respect of which Closing Orders were cancelled as result of premises having been made fit ... Nil
4. Housing Act, 1936, (Part IV) Overcrowding
 1. No. of cases of overcrowded dwellings at end of year (not known officially)
 2. No. of cases discovered during the year ... 19
 3. No. of cases abated during the year ... 15

The Council have rehoused 4 of the 6 families where a member was suffering from notifiable tuberculosis.

Housing Act, 1949.

No applications for improvement grants were received by the Devizes Borough Council during the year.

Housing Repairs and Rents Act, 1954.

Four disrepair certificates were issued as a result of claims made by landlords for rents increase for alleged structural repairs.

Verminous Premises.

Eleven houses were sprayed with liquid D.D.T. to eradicate bed bug infestation. Two applications were necessary in some cases in order to achieve the desired results.

Ice Cream (Heat Treatment) Regulations, 1947-52.

A further 4 premises were registered for the sale of pre-packed ice cream - 37 shops are now selling ice cream in the Borough.

There are three manufacturers of ice cream by the heat treatment method. Their premises were visited on several occasions and the recording charts examined and found to be in order.

Food Premises.

It has not been possible to carry out the necessary regular routine visits to all food premises in the town on account of other pressing essential duties and complaints, mainly meat inspection and sewer air nuisances which were many and time-consuming.

However, several traders were approached with regard to the provision of refrigeration and glass screening of displayed foods as a protection against flies, customers' breaths and other likely sources of contamination. The response has been most encouraging.

Cleansing and redecoration were done at three bakehouses and four grocers' shops as a result of informal action.

During the latter part of the year the occupier of a confectioner's shop was required to provide a sink, with hot and cold water over, sanitary accommodation for the staff and increased ventilation of shop premises. In another case the owner was requested to rearrange the sanitary accommodation so as not to communicate direct with the food storage room.

Informal action resulted in additional sanitary accommodation being provided at a brewery and a Public House for the use of customers of both sexes.

Meat Inspection.

The Central Wiltshire Bacon Co. Ltd. is the only slaughterhouse in operation. Carcasses and organs, etc. were inspected in accordance with the methods recommended by the Ministry of Food—Memo 3/Foods.

The total number of pigs slaughtered	...	...	...	...	15,180
Number of pigs inspected	...	...	...	...	13,040
Number of pigs inspected by the Management	...	...	...	...	2,140

Pig carcasses/organs or parts condemned as unfit for human consumption were as follows :-

All Diseases except Tuberculosis.

Whole Pigs	..	...	...	...	...	...	...	14
Organs or parts of carcasses	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	243
Percentage of number inspected affected with disease 2.01%								

Tuberculosis only.

Whole Pigs	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	12
Organs or parts of Carcasses	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	226
Percentage of number inspected affected with T.B. 2.1%								

The following pig carcasses/organs or parts were condemned as unfit for human consumption.

Tuberculosis.

Whole Pigs ...	...	...	...	...	...	12	2,532 lbs.
Heads ...	...	...	...	...	...	137	2,045½ lbs.
Plucks ...	...	...	...	...	...	62	
Mesenteries ...	...	...	...	...	...	35	
Kidneys ...	...	...	...	...	...	12	
Livers ...	...	...	...	...	...	1	
Spleen ...	...	...	...	...	...	6	
Flecks ...	...	...	...	...	...	2	

Other Causes.

Whole Pigs ...	...	...	...	...	...	14	1,146 lbs
Heads ...	...	...	...	...	...	1	14 lbs
Plucks ...	...	...	...	...	...	55	
Kidneys ...	...	...	...	...	...	62	
Livers ...	...	...	...	...	...	116	
Hind Legs ...	...	...	...	...	...	2	
Hind Quarters ...	...	...	...	...	...	1	
Hind Half ...	...	...	...	...	...	1	
Hocks ...	...	...	...	...	...	5	

Unsound Foods Condemned and Surrendered.

Milk (Condensed) ...	...	...	...	...	...	44 cans	46 lbs	
Fruit ...	...	...	...	...	...	136 cans	215 lbs	15 ozs
Vegetables ...	...	...	...	...	...	316 cans	370 lbs	8 ozs
Soup ...	...	...	...	...	...	6 cans	12 lbs	3 ozs
Spaghetti ...	...	...	...	...	...	1 can		8 ozs
Meat ...	...	...	...	...	...	33 cans	130 lbs	12 ozs
Milk ...	...	...	...	...	...	4 cans	4 pts	
Treacle ...	...	...	...	...	...	2 cans	4 lbs	
Fish ...	...	...	...	...	...	3 cans	1 lb	12 ozs
Golden Syrup ...	...	...	...	...	...	2 cans	4 lbs	
Damsons ...	...	...	...	...	...	1 gall		
Eggs ...	...	...	...	...	...	71		
Cheese ...	...	...	...	...	...	8 lbs		
Pig's Head (T.B.) ...	...	...	...	...	...	1	11 lbs	8 ozs
Hind Quarter Beef ...	...	...	...	...	...	1	48 lbs	
Bovine Liver ...	...	...	...	...	...	1	26 lbs	8 ozs
Meat Tenderloin ...	...	...	...	...	...		18 lbs	
Leg of Pork ...	...	...	...	...	...	1	12 lbs	10 ozs
Pies ...	...	...	...	...	...		5 lbs	
Ox Cheek ...	...	...	...	...	...	2	204 lbs	
Jam ...	...	...	...	...	...	20 jars	20 lbs	
Biscuits ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	18 lbs	9 ozs
Dried Egg ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	14 lbs	

Food Poisoning

Two isolated cases of food poisoning were notified to this Department during the year.
Public Health Act, 1936. Smoke Nuisance.

Factory Managements have from time to time experienced difficulty in preventing the emission of thick black smoke because of having to eke out their ration of boiler fuel by the use of low grade coal. In consequence it has been necessary for me to appeal to the Managements to apply every care in stoking to obtain the best efficiency from the boiler in order to reduce the emission of smoke to a minimum.

Thirty-seven complaints were made during the year regarding offensive smells from sewers or drains. Investigations were carried out in every case which necessitated testing drains with smoke and water all of which proved to be defective. Much time was spent in seeking defects in drainage systems that had no manholes and the supervision of reconstruction.

Numerous complaints were received from residents in the London Road area regarding the foul condition of the water along the canal from the Cemetery Bridge to Coate Bridge. Although part of this length of canal is in the Rural District Council's area the writer searched along the banks and discovered several possible sources of pollution which are likely to be of sewage origin and require fuller investigation as soon as ever time permits. My findings were reported to the Rivers Pollution Officer and to the Rural District Council's Sanitary Inspector for them to deal with their duties in the matter.

Brickley Lane ditch was the subject of several complaints because of chokage and flooding partly arising from large accumulation of refuse deposited by Council House tenants. The ditch was cleaned out by the Devizes Borough and Rural District Council. The Borough Council had warning notices displayed which proved to be a deterrent to offenders. However the main cause of the trouble is due to the fact that there is no outlet at the lower end of the ditch to allow surface water to drain away.

Rodent Control.

The Rodent Operator's services on alternate weeks between the Devizes Borough Council and the Rural District Council continues to work satisfactorily.

Accounts are dealt with by the Borough Treasurer's Department and records are kept by the writer.

The Borough sewers had two treatments during the year. The rat infestation was found to be higher than usual on the first treatment. No doubt this was due to only one treatment being carried out the previous year on account of Mr. Perrett's long absence from duties through illness. Systematic treatment is the only way of keeping infestation down to a minimum.

All complaints of vermin infestations receive attention.

Petroleum Acts, etc.

Two steel Petrol tanks were fixed underground in concrete chambers under supervision. The tanks were air pressure tested and licences issued.

FACTORIES ACTS 1937 and 1948,—PART 1 OF THE ACT

Premises	Number on Register (3)	Number of Inspections (4)	Written Notices (5)	Occupiers (6)
(i) Factories in which Sections 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 are to be enforced by Local Authorities	40	2	2	—
(ii) Factories not included in (i) in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority	2	—	—	—
(iii) Other Premises in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority (excluding Out-workers' Premises)	29	1	1	—
TOTAL	71	3	3	—

Cases in which defects were found

Particulars	Number of cases in which defects were found				Number of cases in which prosecutions were instituted (7)
	Found (3)	Remedied (4)	Referred to H.M. Inspector (5)	by H.M. Inspector (6)	
Ineffective Drainage to floors (s.6)	—	—	—	—	—
Sanitary Conveniences (s.7)					
(a) Insufficient	2	2	—	—	—
(b) Unsuitable or defective	1	1	—	—	—
(c) Not separate for sexes	—	—	—	—	—
TOTAL	3	3	—	—	—

Summary of Duties

Nuisance Complaints	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	95
Nuisances Abated	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	72
Smoke Nuisance Complaints	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	4
Statutory Notices	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	6
Interviews with Owners/Builders/Representatives	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	156
Miscellaneous Visits	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	274
Visits re Works in Progress	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	475
Drains-Smoke Tests	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	160
Smoke Tracings	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	48
Colour Tests	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	58
Water Tests	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	33
Housing Inspections (completed)	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	31
Housing Inspections (commenced)	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	31
Visits re Housing Acts	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	12
Visits re Verminous Houses	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	19
Verminous Housing Sprayed	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	11
Visits re Overcrowding	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	26
Visits re Dangerous Premises	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	4
Food Inspections	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	269
Visits re								
Food Premises	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	6
Food and Drugs Act	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	6
Shops Act	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	4
Ice Cream Premises	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	12
Bakehouses	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	6
Confectioners	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
Fried Fish Shops	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2
Dairies	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	6
Factories Acts	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	6
Rodent Control	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	53
Petroleum Acts	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2
Air Pressure Tests applied to Tanks	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2
Informal Letters	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	73
Miscellaneous Letters	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	143

I am, Mr. Mayor, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant.

KENNETH WILDEY,
Sanitary Inspector.

